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Ordination Sermon

Preach'd at

CHICHESTER

Jan. 9th 170⁶/₇.

WHEREIN

The NOTION of ORDINATION is Stated,
Popular Pretences are briefly Refuted, and
the Power of PRESBYTERS to Or-
dain, is modestly Vindicated.

By SIMON BROWNE,
Minister in Portsmouth.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Symphon, at the Harp
in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1707.

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WHEREIN

The Nature of Ordination is Stated
Popular Testimonies are briefly Related
The Love of PLEASANT RUSTON
being is modestly vindicated.



By SAMUEL JOHNSON
Minister of the Gospel

L O N D O N

Printed by R. Gutteridge, at the Ship
in St. Paul's Church-yard. 170.

TITUS I. 5. latter part.

— *And ordain Elders in every City.*

THE Best and most Excellent things in the World are liable to Great Corruption and Abuses. The Sacred Truths and Institutions of the Gospel, which by their *Divine Authority*, one would think, are sufficiently guarded from the profane Violations of Impious Men, have yet, for the service of the meanest Designs, been grossly disguis'd, mangled, and deform'd, yea, turn'd out of doors, to make room for the wild Suggestions of an *extravagant Fancy*. Things Divine in their Original have been made Monstrous by vain Mixtures and imaginary ornamental Additions; and the meer Creatures of Human Imagination (and that when *Delirious* too) have been call'd *Divine*, and impos'd, asserted, and propagated as *such*, for mercenary purposes, whilst Institutions and Ordinances truly divine have been scorn'd and trampled under foot. Nay, the Violence us'd, on one hand, in obtruding human Ordinances for divine, and cloathing the Fancies of Men with the Authority of God, hath driven some to the *contrary Extream*, and prompted them, in opposition to

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the Humour of Imposers, to break in pieces the very Bonds of a Divine Obligation, and to reckon themselves free from all Regulations, because others, without any *shew of Authority*, have acted so rigorously in obtruding theirs.

THUS hath the Useful Institution of *Ministerial Ordination* suffer'd between two opposite Extreams, whilst *Papists* tell us of I know not what *Indelible Character* to be stamp'd by *their* Bishops on the Persons they ordain: And many who call themselves *Protestants* (and tis hop'd many of 'em are in the main what they pretend) follow the *Romanists* in declaring all Ordinations void and null, in which *Diocesan* Bishops have had no hand. And, on the other hand, many *Sectaries* and *Libertines* tell us, That either the People or Lay-men themselves, without the Concurrence of any else, may ordain Ministers, or else, That all Order and Regulation in these matters are *Design* and *Priestcraft*, the Forgery of pretending Men, who could themselves domineer under the mask of a Divine Authority, and make Lay-men their Slaves and Lackeys. So true is the Satyrists's Observation in our Days:

Dum vitant Stulti vitia in Contraria currunt.

NOR is it difficult, notwithstanding, to steer safe between these Extreams; for,

THAT there was such a thing as Solemn Ordination of Ministers in the *Apostolical* Age is past Question, from our Text.

THAT Ministers, as distinguish'd from the People, had the principal hand in it, tho'
Populo

popula Consensiente where Pastors were ordain'd
for 'em, is evident from this Text compar'd
with others.

THAT *Titus*, who was left in *Crete* to do
his Work, did Act therein as a *Diocesan Bi-*
shop, is what I despair of seeing prov'd.

THAT the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*
were written as standing Rules for the *Church*,
and not expiring Orders, to die with that Age
of Prodigies, is what shou'd methinks, be no
way Disputable among Christians.

THAT they were own'd as such by the
Church Universal in the earliet Ages, is known
to such as have look'd into their History.

WILL it not follow then, that what the
Apostles and Extraordinary Ministers did in
that Age about this affair, and advis'd others
to do (as far as it can be learnt from the holy
Scriptures) was done as a *Precedent* to those
that succeed 'em, in the standing part of their
Office? And if this be allow'd, the Power of
Regular Ordination must belong to these Succes-
sors, and to them only: And who these Suc-
cessors be, is not difficult to be known by such,
as having renounc'd all Prejudices of one sort
and another, will give 'em selves leave to be
impartial in their Search and Examination,
provided they truly understand what the Mi-
nisterial Office is: And perhaps the matter
will receive some light by the Sequel of our
Discourse.

THO' there be many Extraordinary Cases
therefore, wherein Ordination of Ministers is
not at all necessary; and 'tis reasonable to think
God hath not left his Church so destitute of

The *Ar-* Power in a *General* Apostacy of their Ministers;
rian for that they can't disown the Apostates, and
instance. choose from among *'emselves* Men fit for the
 Office, yet to argue from such cases Extraor-
 dinary, to Common and Ordinary Occasions,
 is to impose on one's self. And tho' Order be
 not necessary to the *meer being* of a Church,
 which may exist without it, yet Men cannot
 in Common Occasions break thro' an Esta-
 blish'd Order, if it be of *Divine Institution*,
 without sinning against God.

IT can't be amiss therefore, on such an Oc-
 casion, to say somewhat for the setting this
 matter in a true light: In which performance
 the Text read, with the rest of the Holy Scrip-
 tures, and Reason conducted by them, must
 be our Guides.

HERE then we have an Apostolical Man
 left by the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, in
 the *Isle of Crete*, to set some things in order in
 the Churches he had there gather'd, for which
 he himself had no time; and particularly to
 set over them *Pastors*, to guide, teach, govern,
 and exercise Discipline among 'em (for that
 the Elders to be ordain'd were such, will be
 Evident upon a due consideration of the Con-
 text.) And that he might be directed to the
 choice of *proper* Persons, he here sends him the
 Character and Qualifications of such as were
 to be invested with the Office; which Quali-
 fications, the very Light of Nature will tell us,
 are necessary to every *common* and *ordinary*
Pastor, even in this Age of the Church.

I can't

I can't but observe here how plainly this seems to overthrow the Opinion of a modern Ingenious Writer, who would persuade us, that the Apostles and Extraordinary Ministers in *that Age* had the Power of Ordaining others, only for this Reason, because they had a *Peculiar Guidance*

Rights of the Christian Church, a Book that, in opposition to Clergy-tyranny, too plainly endeavours to invalidate all Ministerial Power, if not something that is worse.

of the Spirit, and Special Significations what Particular Persons were to be chosen to the Office; but that upon the ceasing of those miraculous Gifts, the Power of making Ministers reverted to the *Body of the People*, and that every particular Congregation had an *Original inherent Right* to give all Ministerial Power to whom, and in what Method they pleas'd: For 'tis apparent that *Titus* did not act here by any such Extraordinary Direction of the Spirit in his Work, it being every whit as easy for the Spirit to reveal to him the Qualifications of the Persons to be ordain'd, as to direct him to the Choice of Persons so qualified. Either *Paul* therefore was impertinent (*verbo sit venia*) in giving these Directions, or else *Titus* did act in Ordination not as an Extraordinary and Inspir'd Minister, but as a Common one, and a Precedent to *Succeeding* Ministers in the same Work. For what Account can be given of his being left in *Crete* to ordain Elders as a *Common* Minister, if the People, when Christianiz'd, had in Common cases an Original and Inherent Right to make Ministers 'emselfes? Sure 'twill not mend the matter to say, that

that *Paul* having by the immediate Direction of the Holy Ghost, singl'd out *Titus* to this Special Service, took occasion to deliver to the Church in after-ages, thro' his Hands, Rules to proceed by in the Choice of those Persons on whom they were to confer Ministerial Power; for he could have given these Directions to the Body of the People in some one Church or another immediately, if the Spirit of God had design'd to empower them in Ordinary Cases to make their Ministers. Not to say that he would have done thus, and given the Body of Christian People an account of the Reasons for which they were abridg'd the *present Exercise* of their inherent Power, and when they might again resume it.

ALTHO' therefore it can't be denied, that the People have in some cases a Power to call forth particular Persons to the Ministerial Office, which Call *they* are oblig'd to answer, without Ordination by other Ministers, yet, that they are restrain'd from the exercise of this Power in Common Cases, that indeed in Common Cases *they* have no such Power at all, is to me past question from this Example, and many Considerations from the *Nature* of the thing *it self*, which may afterwards fall under our Notice.

ONE thing more, before we pass on to what is principally intended, can't be overlook'd, *viz.* the *Places* in which these Elders were to be ordain'd, which is said to be *in every City, &c.* For here a Difficulty occurs, whe-

whether Several Elders were to be ordain'd in every City, or a Single Elder in each; and so the Elders are to be understood collectively, of all to be ordain'd in the several Cities. Some who contend, that this Church in *Crete* was a *Metropolitan*, and that *Titus* was their settled *Archbishop*, wou'd have us believe that these Elders were *Diocesan* Bishops, one of which was allotted to each City. Others, who defend the same Hierarchy, but upon different Principles, can't find *Metropolitans* so early; no, nor *Diocesan* Bishops neither;

Dr Hammond.

these assert, every Particular Church was govern'd by a Common-Council of *Presbyters* at first, and may perhaps make no difficulty of allowing such a Council to each of the Cities in *Crete*. I'll only observe here as I go on, that if the first of these Opinions be true, and the common Argument drawn from the Ordinations of *Timothy* and *Titus*, for the confinement of that Work to the Superior Episcopal Office, be good, our Prelatical Brethren are as much out of the Right Line as our selves: For if these two were the Precedents to be exactly follow'd in all after-Ordinations, and were indeed *Archbishops*, none but such can Ordain; and then 'emselfes are as little Successors to the Apostles in their Ministry as we, and have as slender Authority. And if the second Opinion be true, That the Church was govern'd by *Presbyters* in common, and these, for the avoiding *Schisms*, chose one

Generality of Divines
of the Church of England
before Archbishop Laud.

from

from among 'em to preside over the rest, and their applauded Maxim be also valid, That *nemo dat quod non habet*, the whole Prelatical Frame seems destitute of all Foundation, and Bishops must descend into the same level with Presbyters; for Presbyters cou'd not vest them with any Power *superior* to what 'emselves were possess'd of. But whether these Schemes, or the different ones of others, must be follow'd in the Prelatical Building, or whether all Schemes form'd for the support of that Structure, be not evidently made to serve an Hypothesis, is a matter of too long consideration to debate here. This only I can't forbear to say, That Men shou'd methinks be ashamed to *Unchristen* and *Damn* so great a part of the Christian World, for not assenting to that Ecclesiastical Frame in gross, the Asserters of which take such different methods to defend it, and give us so various an account of its Constituent Principles. And, that when so much hath been said in the yet *Unanswer'd* Treatise of Episcopacy of Mr. *Baxter*, from the Scriptural and most Natural Notion of the *Episcopal* Office, to invalidate their Pretensions, and that without disowning a *Disparity* between the *Apostles* and other *Primitive Ministers*.

BUT this by the bye. If *Titus* ordain'd as an Archbishop, where's the Precedent for confining this Work to the Episcopal Office? And if every City of *Crete* had a Bishop assign'd to it, their *Dioceses* were much smaller than ours in *England*, (there being

being an hundred Cities in that Island, tho' it did not much exceed in magnitude a third part of the Isle of *Great Britain*) which would make a considerable Diversity between *their* Bishops and *ours*, if it were allow'd that these *Cretan* Presbyters were indeed *Diocesan* Bishops. But whether they were *Bishops* or *Presbyters* in the modern sense, one or many, they were invested with all Ministerial Power; for every thing wanting was to be set in order, and as soon as that was done *Titus* left *Crete*, to do the like Work elsewhere, as the Apostle or the Spirit of God immediately shou'd direct him, and was indeed an *Itinerant Evangelist*. And 'twas an Happy Church, if, during his absence, it never needed the Exercise of Discipline and Ministerial Rule. The Reason why Ministers of any sort were at first ordain'd in Cities, seems to me to be this, That the Apostles did ordinarily first preach the Gospel in them, because of the greater Concourse, and founded Churches, and the few Converts in the neighbourhood might adjoyn 'emselves to the City-Church, without swelling it beyond the bounds of a single Congregation. And I am apt to think the Original will allow us to interpret the Apostle's Advice to *Titus* thus, That he shou'd ordain Elders according to the *Magnitude* of the *Cities* of *Crete*, in some more, in some fewer, according as there was Work for them, either in Churches already gather'd about their Management and Encrease, or in the Congregating new ones. 'Tis past

See *Whitby's* Pref. to the Epistle.

Καὶ ὡς ἂν ᾖ ἡ πόλις.

Doubt with me, that where there is a Church collected of sufficient magnitude for one Man's Care, there should be a Minister set over it, whether he be call'd Bishop or Presbyter, (the Scriptures use both Names promiscuously) who shou'd be invested with *full Power* to govern that Church, and preside over it according to Scripture Rules. And as such a Church requires such a Minister to be set over it, so 'tis the Duty of some Ministers or other appointed by CHRIST, solemnly to admit him into the Office: And *this is Ordination.*

AND now we are brought to the chief Intention of my present Discourse, which is to give you a true account of Scriptural Ordination, to shew you how far 'tis Necessary, and then make a brief Application.

- I. ENQUIRE we what *Ordination* is. Remember that we speak concerning that *Acts 6.2.* of a Gospel Minister, properly so call'd, and not of Deacons, whose Office was to serve Tables. And I conceive the following to be a full Description of this Work: " 'Tis
 " the *Solemn Investiture* of one *duly Quali-*
 " *fied*, with the *Ministerial Office*, by *Persons*
 " *authoriz'd*, with *Fasting, Prayer, and Imposi-*
 " *tion of Hands.* I call it a *Solemn Investiture*
 with the Ministerial Office, to signifie that there must be a Right antecedent to this Investiture, which is the solemn Recognition of it; not that by Ordination a Person hath a new Right and Power, for which there was no Foundation before. The Person to be ordain'd is suppos'd to have by
 that

that *Gospel-Charter*, whereby Ecclesiastical Officers are made, a Rightful Claim to the Ministerial Office, and the Ordainers declare this Claim to be valid, by a public *Inauguration*, as a Mayor elected according to the Charter of any Corporation, hath thereupon a Right to exercise the Office, and that deriv'd from the Sovereign, who is the Fountain of Power in the Commonwealth, and this Right is by his Inauguration solemnly and publickly declar'd; whereas Inauguration, without a *Precedent* Right to the Exercise of Power, would not warrant such Exercise. And yet it is plain here, that such as should despise this Solemn Rite, or refuse it, unless in *case of Necessity*, is not to be own'd by the Body Corporate in the exercise of his Office, but is to be disclaim'd as an Usurper of that Power which no way belongs to him; since 'tis suppos'd to be the declar'd Will of the *Sovereign*, that without such *Solemn Investiture* none shall be admitted to bear the Office.

I call it the Investiture of a *Person duly Qualified*: For as the *Gospel-Charter* doth take particular care in laying before us the Qualifications of such as are to be ordain'd, so no Power of Men, no pretended Solemnity us'd in the Ordination, can give *them* Power for the Exercise of the Office that have not those Qualifications. If by the Charter of this City 'twere requir'd, that all Mayors or Aldermen should be upward of *One-and-twenty Years old*, no Choice by the Citizens, no Inauguration by the proper

Officers, could empower a Person *wanting* this Qualification, to exercise either of the Offices, unless where *none* above this age were to be procur'd, or none with the other *Essential* Requisites. In like manner if by the Churches Charter every one admitted to the Ministerial Office should be Qualified with Gifts of Knowledg and Utterance, and with Sobriety of Life, no Ordination by Ministers of any fort, after a Choice in due form, cou'd convey Ministerial Power and Authority to an Ignorant or Vicious Person, (unless in a Case parallel to the foremention'd) seeing such a one is a Subject incapable of this Power, a Person with whom the Supreme Lord, the Fountain of Power, by that Charter which is the Instrument of Conveyance, did never entrust it, but as above; sure therefore no Officers can invest him with such Power, because CHRIST never gave Authority for such Investiture. Again,

I call it an Investiture by *Persons Authoriz'd*, such as in the Charter have a Power given them by the Sovereign for this solemn Service. 'Tis not every one that pleases can invest a Mayor with his Office, but such only as by the Charter have a Power confer'd on 'em for this end: And if any *others* should assume such Power, as it wou'd be without Foundation in them, so 'twou'd be of no significancy to the *Person* they *pretend* to inaugurate. The like is to be said here. No Persons but such as God doth by his holy Word, the Charter of the Churches

ches Power and Privileges, authorize to set apart Ministers for his Service, can act therein without arrogating to 'emselfes a Power which doth in no wise belong to them: Whenever therefore they meddle with this Work, they act *without* a Commission, and therefore to no purpose, as to the Persons they pretend to ordain. Nay, tho' these have never so good a *Precedent* Right to the Ministerial Office, this Right is not to be esteem'd sufficiently declar'd, till the Declaration be made by Authoriz'd Persons. Finally,

I call it an Investiture made with *Fasting*, *Prayer*, and *Imposition of Hands*, to signify the Method wherein Persons duly Qualified are to be declar'd Ministers, and have their Commission deliver'd to 'em by such as have Authority. And these Circumstances are us'd from Apostolical Precedents, of which we have an account in Scripture. And even in the Nature of the Thing 'tis apparent, that so solemn a Business, wherein the Honour of God and the Interest of his Church are so much concern'd, shou'd not be done without commending the Person ordain'd to *his Blessing* and *Grace*, without imploring his *Acceptance* and *Benediction*. And then, for the greater freedom of *their* Minds who are imploy'd, 'tis convenient that *Prayer* shou'd be attended with *Fasting*. 'Tis evident this last is not a Duty enjoyn'd for its own sake, there being no Moral Good in it, but in subserviency to the Soul's Devotion in other Exercises of Religion; the Head being sup-
pos'd

pos'd more clear, the Heart more light,
 and therefore the whole Soul more free for
 Spiritual Exercises by reason of this Absti-
 nence. But then as to the Ceremony of
Imposing Hands, such Reason for the use of
 it is not to be collected from the Nature of
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 stles did borrow this *Rite* from the *Jews*,
 who did use it particularly in the Ordina-
 tion of Officers in their *Synagogues*; and that,
 as Bishop *Stillingfleet* hints, for two Ends;
First, To denote the devoting the Person on
 whom Hands were laid to the peculiar Use
 and Service of God, and therefore sure the
 conveying all that Power which was neces-
 sary for the performing this Service. *Se-*
condly, To invoke the Divine Presence and
 Assistance to be with the Person on whom
 Hands were laid; for, as he adds from *Gro-*
tius, the Hands being among Men the chief
 Instruments of Action, they did by stretching
 'em out on the Person ordain'd, represent
 the Efficacy of that Divine Power which they
 did implore on his behalf. 'Tis certain the
Apostles and Primitive *Ministers* did use this
 Rite in their Ordinations, and that for some
 such Ends as have been specified, whether
 they did borrow it from the *Jews* or no.
 And this Action was of so much importance
 in the Work, that 'tis often us'd for the
 Whole in Ordination. Lay Hands suddenly on
 no man, Neglect not the Gift which is in thee,
 i. e. the Office of an Evangelist; Given by
 the laying on the Hands of the Presbytery, i. e.
 by their Ordination of him to this Office.

I shall

1 Tim.
 5. 22.

Chap. 4.
 14.

I shall have done with the Explication of this Description, when I have added, That the Business of an Investiture or Inauguration is not barely to declare a Person an Officer chosen and constituted according to the Charter; but moreover to administer to him an Oath of *Fidelity* to his Prince, and oblige him by the like Tye to the Faithful Discharge of his Office. The like is to be said of Solemn Ministerial Ordination.

AND now 'tis apparent that our Business under this Head, wherein I have propos'd to state the Notion of Ordination, will be dispatch'd by answering these three Questions :

1. WHAT the Ministerial Office is ?
 2. WHO is to be esteem'd a Person duly qualified for it ?
 3. WHO have Authority to declare a Person duly qualified to be a Lawful Minister of CHRIST by this solemn Investiture ?
- For I reckon enough hath been said already of the Circumstances with which this is to be done, to give just Notions of their Significancy and Intention : So that if we can give you so good an account of the other parts of our Description, I hope we shall help you to such a Notion of Ordination as will be *Clear* and *Satisfactory*, and manifest, that 'tis not such a *meer Chimera* and so unintelligible as some pretend. We will see what may be done then, beginning with the

First,

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A N D now 'tis apparent that our Business under this Head, wherein I have propos'd to state the Notion of Ordination, will be dispatch'd by answering these three Questions :

1. W H A T the Ministerial Office is ?
 2. W H O is to be esteem'd a Person duly qualified for it ?
 3. W H O have Authority to declare a Person duly qualified to be a Lawful Minister of C H R I S T by this solemn Investiture ?
- For I reckon enough hath been said already of the Circumstances with which this is to be done, to give just Notions of their Significancy and Intention : So that if we can give you so good an account of the other parts of our Description, I hope we shall help you to such a Notion of Ordination as will be *Clear* and *Satisfactory*, and manifest, that 'tis not such a *meer Chimera* and so unintelligible as some pretend. We will see what may be done then, beginning with the

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1. *First*, W H A T the Ministerial Office is, with which a Person is invested by Ordination? And none will, I believe, quarrel with me for calling it an *Authority* and *Obligation* to perform *some Special Acts* for the *Glory of G O D*, and the *Salvation of Men*. Indeed *Obligation* to perform these Acts doth necessarily infer *Authority*: That can never be a Duty binding on me, for which in a legal sense I have no Power or Authority. The Great God therefore, by making any thing our Duty, doth *ipso facto* give us a Commission for the doing it, a Commission irrevocable as long as the Duty is binding. And, on the other hand, 'tis undoubted, that whoever hath from CHRIST a Minister's *Commission*, is oblig'd in Duty to the Performance of Ministerial Work: He hath given none a Commission to be idle 'em-selves; and depute others to perform their Work: He that doth not act in Person as a Minister, will ne'er be accounted by his LORD to act as a Minister at all. And 'tis as certain that the Great *Ends* of the Office are the *Glory of God*, and the *Salvation of Men*. So that in all this there is no Difficulty. But, alas! there is *too much* disputed about the Ministerial Work it self, whilst some, who make a *Subordination* of Ministers in the Christian Church, do assert some Ministerial Acts to be proper and peculiar to the *Superior Officer*, and wholly without the Verge of an *Inferior Minister's Offices*. And others, who assert a *Parity* among Ministers, in the *Essentials* of their Office,

Office, oppose *this* as an *Illegal Appropriation*, and contend, That every Gospel-Minister hath a full Commission to perform all Ministerial Service, and, as he hath opportunity, is oblig'd to it. We must be forc'd therefore to touch a little on these Different Claims, to clear our way, and shall do it with as much Modesty as we can, and yet with as much Freedom as the Truth challenges from us.

I find then these following Acts asserted to be the *Bishops* peculiar, by a Zealous Defender of the Superiority of their Order. *Dr. Scott's Christian Life, Part II, vol. 2.* *Legislation*, or a Power of making *Canons* or Ecclesiastical Laws. *Jurisdiction*, the executing these Laws in Church *Judicatories*. *Confirmation* and *Ordination*. As for the first of these, I wonder how it came into a Chapter treating of the Ministers of CHRIST's Kingdom; it looks a little odd at first view, to assign a Power of *Legislation* to the Ministers of a King, which uses to be an unalienable Prerogative of the Sovereign Power, and is rarely *deputed* to *Inferior* Ministers. The *utmost* Power that I can think is left with CHRIST's Ministers, is that of applying general Rules to particular Cases: And even then their Determinations have no more Power on the Conscience, in which all *Ecclesiastical Authority* must terminate, than there is Evidence of their Conformity to the *Laws* of CHRIST, and are therefore obliging only by *his* Authority. And methinks 'tis a very indefensible Position, to say *indefinitely* of those that bear Rule in a
D Society,

Society, that they must have a Legislative Power. 'Tis confess'd indeed that the *whole* Church, as *one* Society, and govern'd by one *Constant Supreme* Head, which is CHRIST, hath, as all other Societies, a *Legislative* Power in this Governour; but to infer thence, that the same Power doth belong to the *Inferior* Officers in this Kingdom, is just as if a Man should infer the Legislative Authority of *Judges* and *Justices* of the *Peace* from the same Authority in the Supreme Court of Parliament, as compos'd of *Queen, Lords, and Commons*. And should we suppose *Justices* of the *Peace* oblig'd in their several Districts to publish at set times the Sovereign's *Laws*, to explain 'em, and press their Observance, and afterwards see to their Execution among those that attend at their meetings, and engage to pay due Obedience, we should have a *Resemblance* of that Ministry CHRIST hath instituted in his Church, and that Power he hath intrusted with his Ministers. Methinks sufficient Power is lodg'd with these Inferior Officers, when they are intrusted with the execution of Laws made by the Supreme Authority. The same I say as to Gospel-Ministers, only here indeed is a difference in the exercise of their Power, that a Judge or Justice's Determination in a particular Case, tho' by misapplication of the Rule, may do a Person *real* damage, and actually deprive him of the Benefits of a Citizen; but a Minister's misapplication of the Rule can never deprive any of the Benefits of a Christian, tho' he
may

may be forbidden by it the use of those means by which they are *ordinarily* convey'd.

NAY, 'tis worthy of remark, that if we could suppose the Supreme *Legislators* of these Lands endu'd with such a Foresight of things to come, as that they could make General Laws, that wou'd suit at all times, with all possible Particular Circumstances of the Kingdom in general, and the several Members of it, and that upon such Foresight they shou'd frame such a body of Laws, as there wou'd be no room for future amendment; so, I conceive, all Inferior Officers wou'd have a *sufficient* allowance of Power, if they were only to look to the due publication and faithful execution of these Laws, without any Authority to make new ones. And methinks when *Protestants* do assert the holy Scriptures to be a sufficient Rule of Faith and Manners, they shou'd not yet imagin the LORD JESUS defective in his Care of his Church, tho' he hath reserv'd to himself the *Power of Legislation*, and only made his Ministers the *Interpreters* of his Laws, and *Officers* to look to their execution, reserving nevertheless to the Subjects a Liberty of *appealing* to himself, where they have ground to esteem 'emselves wrong'd by their misinterpretation. I can't find that in the Scriptures *uninspir'd* Men are entrusted with any farther Power, nay, nor *inspir'd* Men neither; they being only Ministers to declare to the Church what the Will of CHRIST was, and what he made their Duty; and the Authority of Men *uninspir'd* can't in reason be *extended* farther. As far

therefore as any that pretend to be the Successors of *inspir'd* Men can prove, that what they call their *Canons* or *Laws* are binding by the Will of CHRIST, I am willing my self to yield Obedience, and that all other Christians shou'd; tho' I shall still retain this Persuasion, That even then the Laws are not obliging as they are *theirs*, or as if they were entrusted with a *Power* to make such, but only as they are the declar'd Will of CHRIST, made known to them in the Scriptures of Truth, or by any other way of which they can give *sufficient* Evidence. And all the Arguments this learned Man alledges from the Scripture, to support his Assertion, do either prove that *inspir'd* Men did, by the direction of the *Holy Spirit*, give orders to the Churches, as in the Controversy determin'd at *Jerusalem*; or else, that Inferior Officers did act by the direction of *Inspir'd* Apostles, as in the Case of *Timothy* and *Titus*: Which are really so wide from what he wou'd pretend to prove, that 'tis wonderful to me Men of good Reason shou'd so easily impose upon themselves.

Acts 11.
28.

AS to what the same worthy Person calls *Jurisdiction*, which, he tells us, is a Power of enquiring into the Offences of Christians, and of inflicting Censures, I am sure, if it be a *Peculiar* of the Bishop's Office, (as he himself has describ'd it) Bishops must be vastly different from those Officers to whom the Name is appropriated here in *England*. To take no notice of what may be said to the same purpose, from the consideration of that Work
which

which he tells us is theirs in common with others; and because it would lead me away too far from my present purpose, to draw this Argument into its due length, I wou'd refer such as are willing to be satisfied to the 'fore-mention'd Treatise of Mr. *Baxter*, where they will also see how inconsistent *Confirmation* Episcopacy, Par. II. Cap. 18. (which is made another Branch of the Bishop's peculiar Work) is with the Office, as now manag'd in *England*, and the Power which our Bishops claim. How far their Claim of *Ordination* to the *exclusion* of other Ministers is *just*, will be seen best under our Third Enquiry, to which the Reader is refer'd.

THUS much was, I think, necessary to be said here, as an Introduction to our Enquiry about Ministerial Acts, to remove Obstacles out of the way; we now proceed to see from Scripture and the nature of things, what Work belongs to Ministers, according to the appointment of CHRIST. And that we may do this the more fully and orderly, we must observe, that the Minister's Work is *different*, according to the *differing Subjects* we must work upon, which are either the *Unconverted* and *Unbelieving*; or those which are *converted*, but not receiv'd into a *Church-relation* and *state*, or those who are in *Communion* with the *Church*, to whom he is related as a *Pastor*.

I. THEN his Work with the *Unconverted* is, to shew 'em their miserable Condition, labour to bring 'em to a sense and feeling of it, that they may become willing to 'scape the Danger that threatens 'em; and then to preach to 'em the acceptable Year of the LORD, to shew 'em that

that Peace is to be had with G O D thro' CHRIST, and upon what Terms, and to persuade 'em in the Name of CHRIST to be reconcil'd to G O D; and this both in *public Preaching* and by *private Application*, as he hath a Call and Opportunity. This I esteem to be in order of Nature the *first* Work of a Minister, as 'tis first express'd in the Commission,

Mat. 28. *Go, disciple all Nations.* And 'tis from this
19. part of their Work that they are call'd *Em-*
2 Cor. 5. *bassadors* from CHRIST, to proclaim Terms
20. of Peace to Men, and to invite and press 'em to accept it.

2. THOSE who are already *converted* they are to enter into the Church by *Baptism*, if not baptiz'd before, and *their Children*, when presented to 'em for this End, and offer'd up in this Ordinance to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by the Parents. And in order to this, they must be acquainted with the *Understanding* and *Practice* of those who are to be baptiz'd 'emselvcs, or offer their Children to Baptism, so far as to know whether they are, in the Judgment of Charity, to be accounted sound Believers, and so fit to have the Covenant-Seal apply'd to 'emselvcs or theirs; for 'tis past question with me, that no Children of ignorant ungodly Persons are *de jure* to be baptiz'd, nor such Persons themselves, but only *such* as by a Profession of Faith in CHRIST and Repentance for Sin, which may charitably be accounted sincere, do declare 'emselvcs unfeignedly willing to enter into Covenant with God by this Ordinance, and to live Faithful therein to the Day of Death. And, not to stay

stay long on the Argument here, Why is a Profession of Faith requir'd now on such an occasion? Why hath it been requir'd in all Ages of the Church, if it be not necessary to entitle to *Baptism* and *Baptismal Privileges*? Why did *Philip* himself put that Supposition to the converted *Eunuch*, *If thou dost believe with all thine Heart, thou maist be baptized*? Yea, doth not this very Expression imply, that it must be a Profession of Sound and Saving Faith, and sincere Repentance? Sure then 'tis past question, that it must be such a Profession as is charitably to be esteem'd credible, because else the whole Performance were a Mockery. That this Baptizing is a part of the Ministerial Work in general, is also evident from the Commission, *Go, disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* Acts 8: 37.

AND here I can't but think, that if Ministers did take care to enquire into the Faith and Practice of those baptiz'd in Infancy, when they are grown up to *riper Years*, and press and urge 'em publickly to renew their *Baptismal Covenant*, and own CHRIST in the other solemn Sacrament, if they are found fit, (which is the sound sense of *Confirmation*, thought by some to be Apostolical, and meant in that Text, *Heb. 6. 1, 2.*) I say, I can't but think this wou'd be much for the Service of Religion and Mens Souls, if it be not plain Duty and a part of every Minister's Work, to the performance of which he is oblig'd.

THE Minister's Work, among those that are *Converted* and enter'd into a *Church state*, is various: Every Minister hath a Power given him Mat. 28: 19.

him by CHRIST, to represent him in the threefold Office of *Prophet, Priest, and King*; there being no where in *holy Scripture*, as I can find, a confinement of one peculiar kind of Work to any particular *Order* of Ministers. 'Tis acknowledg'd indeed that *Apostles*, during their residence on Earth, did most eminently bear Rule in the Church, but no where, as I find, so as to exclude *other* Ministers from a share in this Service: And I believe, shou'd a Set of Men appear now in the World as eminently qualified for Ruling as the Apostles were, all other Ministers shou'd, as they had opportunity, consult 'em, and be regulated by 'em in the *management* of Church-affairs. Nay, I know none that wou'd refuse to be directed in these affairs by any who cou'd make good their Claim to a Derivation of superior Power from the Apostles, by that Word of Truth which is the Christian's Rule and Guide. Nor can I for my own part utterly disclaim all *Presidency* of some Ministers over others in the Christian Church. The *Superintendency* in use among some *Foreign Protestant Churches* wou'd not be unserviceable, I believe, in ours: But this I am bold to say, That whilst *Apostles* were living here on Earth, and the most eminent Ministers in the Church, and therefore Rulers of it so far as ruling doth belong to CHRIST's Ministers, yet a *Stated Pastor* of a particular Church was more capable of governing *that* Church than they, whose Work was more vagous and general, unless where a long abode upon the place, and exercise of the Pastoral Office among the People, afforded

them

them the same Advantages for Government as it cou'd afford any other Stated Pastor. And such perhaps was *Paul's Ministry at Ephesus*; Acts 20: tho' I think 'tis evident, that he did not intend by his presence there to take from all Inferior Ministers the exercise of Government, because that in his final Valediction he advises 'em to the *faithful exercise* of that Episcopal Office which they had before, tho' they might not be so much imploy'd therein during his abode among 'em, as they must be after his departure. I don't find any thing in the Writings of the *New Testament* that saith, Such a Minister shall only *Teach* in the Church and *Administer* the *Sacrament*, whilst Church-Rule is reserv'd to a more-elevated Officer: Tho' I question not but where several Ministers are in a Church, they may so divide their Work among 'em, as may best attain their *general Ends*, and reserving the *Power* and *Authority* for several Ministerial Works, they may yet forbear the *Exercise* of 'em, because the Office is for the Ends of it, and where these are best pursu'd, there the Obligations of the Office are best comply'd with. But from what hath been already said, may be infer'd,

1. THAT 'tis the Minister's Work to *teach* the Flock committed to his charge, by opening and applying to 'em the *Holy Scriptures*; 2 Tim. *Preach the Word in season, and out of season.* 4. 1, 2. And herein a wise regard must be had to the diversity of his Peoples Circumstances; he must lay before 'em the whole of that Duty that, as Christians, they are oblig'd to perform,

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form, and perswade and press 'em to the Practice of it; give 'em an account of all those *Doctrines* that are *necessary* to be known and believ'd in order to Salvation, and, as 'tis necessary, vindicate 'em from the Assaults of *Erroneous Men*; this being, as I conceive, imply'd

Tit. 1. 9. in his *Ability by sound Doctrin to convince Gainsayers*. And conformably to this part of their

Eph. 4. Work, they are often stiled *Prophets and Teachers*, in the Writings of the *New Testament*.

11.
1 Cor. 14. To which he must also add that most *effectual*

32. way of Instructing by his own Visible *Good Example*, in all holy and blameless Conversation, in the Practice of all Christian Duties

1 Pet. 5. 3 and Exercise of all Christian Virtues and Graces.

2. IN the Exercise of the *Priestly Office* under CHRIST, 'tis the Minister's Work to be the Mouth of the People to God in *Prayers and Thanksgivings*; and the Mouth of God to the People, in giving such Answers from him as are suitable to their Case, after solemn Enquiry of him upon their Knees, and of his blessed Word: To commemorate, according to CHRIST's appointment, his *Meritorious Sacrifice* of himself, and in this Commemoration to deliver CHRIST's Body and Blood, and his Covenant seal'd, with all the Privileges and Benefits of it, to the People committed to his charge; and, finally, to pronounce his People *Blessed*, in the Name of the LORD. Something typical of all this was in use under the old *Jewish Dispensation*, tho' more under Clouds, and without that Illustration which by the Gospel hath been afforded to all

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the Institutes of Religion. But, that these are parts of the Minister's Work, is confess'd by all, and might be prov'd by Scripture-Testimonies, if it were necessary.

3. IN the Exercise of *Government* under CHRIST, Ministers are to publish, declare, and explain his *Laws*, and command the People to be obedient to 'em; they are to preside over the Flock, and govern 'em by these Laws, as shall be most for the Glory of God, and Good of the Church, as a Body, and of particular Members: And therefore are they to admonish, exhort, reprove, and censure according to the several Cases that come before 'em; to cast out the Obstinate and Impenitent, to encourage and declare such absolv'd as are sincerely Penitent, and receive them again to Church Fellowship; to defend such as are innocent from false Accusations; to inflict proper Spiritual Censures on such as are unruly, and walk in a disorderly manner. Such Acts as these do, by the Confession of those that allow any Government in the Church, belong to the Exercise of it. And this Rule being *Fatherly* and *Pastoral*, doth imply Meekness and Love, Gentleness and Kindness in the management of it: 'tis a Rule terminating on the Mind and Conscience, and operating by way of Perswasion and Argument, not of *Temporal Mulcts* and *Corporal Penalties*: tho' Arguments proper to beget Fear and Terror must sometimes be us'd, as well as those that are address'd to the *softer Passions*, and move on 'em. And with respect to this Paternal Rule and Inspection, sometimes Mini-

sters are call'd *Bishops*, *Ἐπίσκοποι*, sometimes *Pastors*, *Ποιμένες*, as in the general they are call'd *Ministers*, *Stewards*, &c. all which Names do imply as much Government and Power confer'd on Ordinary Guides and Ministers, as any of Sound Minds contend for: And such as divest all Ministers of all Authority and *Governing Power*, do so directly fly in the Face of Scripture and the Sense of the Church in all Ages, that they are hardly fit to be disputed with, tho' we are willing they should say as much as they can against *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*, and all *Usurpations* upon the *People*, and *Abuses* of that Power which is given by CHRIST to his Ministers for *Edification*, not for *Destruction*; for the *Peoples* Benefit and Salvation, not the *aggrandizing* themselves, and accumulating *Temporal Dignities* and *Estates*.

BUT now supposing such a thing as *Government* and *Rule* in the Church by CHRIST's *Ministers*, I can't but think, all who preside over particular Congregations are entrusted with it. The Scriptures no where assert this to be the *Peculiar Trust* of any Particular *Order* of Ministers: The Apostle *Paul* on the contrary advises the *Elders* of Churches to look to the Flocks over which the Holy Ghost had made *ἐπισκόπους* *Bishops*: And *Peter* exhorts 'em to act the *Bishops* readily, and without Force or Constraint. And indeed otherwise due Provision had hardly been made for answering the Ends of the Ministerial Office, since 'tis apparent that one Man is incapable of doing this Work among a few Congregations of any considerable *magnitude* or *numbers*: Tho' whether the
exer-

Acts 20.
17, 28.

ἐπισκόπους
*ἐπισκο-
 πῶντες*
 1 Pet. 5.
1, 2.

exercise of this Ministerial Power in every Church may not be under the *Regulation* of a superior Minister, acting as a *Bishop* over these *Bishops* of the *Flock*, is a Question foreign to our present business; and whether it be determin'd one way or other, is not of the last importance. But those who wou'd shrink all particular Congregations or Parishes into so many Limbs or Branches of a *Diocesan* Church, take care indeed to furnish the *Bishop* or ruling Minister of that Church with a large Authority, but forget that Ministerial Power implies an obligation to Ministerial Work. Or which is all one, they take away *Useful* Ministerial Power from particular Ministers, such as might answer the Intentions of the Office, bring Glory to God, and do good to Mens Souls, that they may furnish a *General Minister* with a *Useless* Power, vast in its pretended extent, but of little signification to the great Purposes of the Ministerial Office, because stretch'd beyond the *Sphere* of Human Power and Activity.

AND now we have given you some account of the Ministerial Office, by shewing you what Acts a Minister of the Gospel is empower'd and oblig'd to perform, for the Glory of God and the Good of Souls; which will make way for answering the

Second Enquiry, WHO is to be esteem'd a Person *duly Qualified* for this Office? And because we have told you already, that some Qualifications are necessary to the being a valid Minister, which can't be absent without destroying the Man's Title, 'tis of Importance
here

here to give true notions of Things; however it must be observ'd, that a difference is to be made between such Qualifications as are necessary to the Man's *Acceptance* with God in the discharge of his Office, and those which are barely necessary to the Exercise of it with *Validity* to the *People*, and for their benefit and advantage. God may make use of some as Ministers in his Church, and bless their Ministrations to the People, and other Ministers may be oblig'd to Ordain such, and own 'em for Brethren, who will be disown'd by God at the last Day, as none of his Servants. A Person of good Learning and Understanding in religious matters, of seeming Strictness and Seriousness in his Life and Conversation, of a winning Temper and Carriage, and warm and pathetical Elocution, may do great Service in the Church of God to the Souls of Men, nay, more perhaps than a *Sincerely-pious* Minister who wants these *Accidental* Advantages, and yet be an Hypocrite at the Heart, and therefore destitute of those Qualifications that in *Foro DEI* (as some talk) are essential to a Minister, without which he can't discharge his Office to the Acceptation of his Sovereign: But of the Presence or Absence of these Qualifications God only, who knoweth the Heart, can be *Judge*; Men, who must judge by external Signs, are to act according to the *probable* Appearances of things. And they are such Qualifications as are necessary in the Eyes of Men, to fit a Man for this Office, about which our present Enquiry is made; an Answer to it may be taken in the following Particulars.

I. 'TIS

7: 'TIS plain that, according to appearance, the Person ordain'd must be a *Serious Christian*, one who hath repented of his Sins, doth believe in CHRIST, and make it the Business of his Life to serve and obey him; how else shou'd his *Example* teach the Flock? How else shou'd he labour in his Office for the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Souls? A Man must profess that these are his Intentions, and nothing in his Life must *notoriously* contradict this Profession, which a *visible* Disregard to his own Soul's Salvation will certainly do. Sure the Apostle *Paul* had never been so careful to direct *Timothy* and *Titus* about the Qualifications of those to be entrusted with the Ministerial Office, if *thus much* be not necessary to fit a Man for it. 'Tis evident therefore, that no *Infidel*, no *vicious*, *ungodly*, and *openly-impenitent* Person can be qualified for the Ministerial Office, nor can any Ordination invest such a one with Ministerial Power; tho' a close Hypocrite may be ordain'd, as we have observ'd already, and do much Service in the Church. And to this purpose is that Saying of the Apostle, *Some mens Sins go beforehand to* 1 Tim. Judgment, *and others they follow after*; q. d. some 5. 24. Men do by their wicked Works appear unqualified beforehand; such must be *refus'd* Ordination: Others do not discover any such Unfitness till afterward; but when by their *vicious* Behaviour they declare 'emselfes *destitute* of Ministerial Qualifications, they also declare 'emselfes destitute of *that* Power which at first cou'd never be given to, and therefore never can remain with the *Unqualified*. Again,

2. THE

2. T H E Person ordain'd a Minister must have a Judgment to *discern* between Truth and Error, and a Knowledge of the *Essential* Doctrins and Duties of *Christianity*; for he that hath not such Capacity, may take Error for Truth, may make a corrupt mixture of both; may *infect* therefore and *poison* the Church, instead of feeding them with *wholesome* Food. He that doth not understand the main Body of Christian Precepts and Principles, can never convey the Knowledge of 'em to others, nor help and improve their Understandings. 'Tis plain therefore, that a *notoriously* Ignorant and Injudicious Person, not capable of discerning between Truth and dangerous Error against the Truth, that hath not an Understanding of the *Essential* Branches of *Christianity*, nor a firm Persuasion of their Truth, is a Person *Unqualified* for the Ministerial Office. Again,

3. A Person Ordain'd a Minister must have a Capacity to *defend* the Doctrins and Duties of *Christianity* from the Assaults of *Erroneous Men*, as there may be occasion. I don't mean, that he shou'd be of a Polemical Temper, presently to take fire and give an Alarm, if there be any seeming or real Diversity between his Sense and another's, about matters *Extra-essential*, that do not belong to the Heart and Life of Religion, nay, nor about matters that are of the *Essence* of *Christianity*, unless the Difference be *evidently* and *manifestly* dangerous: But if any *Essential* Branches of *Christianity* shou'd be oppugn'd, a Person *Uncapable* of defending 'em (of proving their Truth, I mean, by sufficient Evidence, tho' he may not be able to

to answer every Cavil) is *Unqualified* for the Ministerial Office, at least *in that Place* and *Season*, when and where this Opposition is made. And thus much is, I conceive, intended by the Apostle in that *Ability by sound Doctrin* Tit. 1. 11. *to convince Gainsayers*, which he makes one necessary Qualification of the Officers *Titus* was to ordain in *Crete*.

4. ANOTHER Qualification of a Minister is, a Capacity to *Communicate* that *Knowledge in Christianity* which himself hath to others, by Discourses suited to their *Capacities* and *Cases*; an Ability to explain the Doctrins of the Holy Scriptures to 'em, to press and persuade 'em to embrace the Truths, accept the Privileges, perform the Duties of the Gospel. This is certainly imply'd in that *aptness to teach* which 1 Tim. the Apostle makes a Qualification of a *Christian* 3. 2. *Bishop*. He therefore who is not capable of dressing his Thoughts in apt Words, such as will convey the Light in his own Mind to the Minds of others, whatever his own Understanding be, is not *qualified* for the Ministerial Office. Again,

5. I think an *Ability to express* the Wants and Desires of a Man's own Soul, and of his People, to GOD in Prayer, is another necessary Qualification in a Minister of CHRIST. That it is a part of the Ministerial Work, to offer up *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* to GOD, as the Mouth of the People, we have shewn already: That the *Apostles* and *First Ministers* of the Church did Pray to GOD, and render Thanks *pro re nata*, and as Occasion did offer, without having Forms compos'd for 'em, is allow'd by

All : That a Capacity for *this* is not the result of *Extraordinary Inspiration*, but to be acquir'd with the *Ordinary* and *Common* Influences of the *Spirit* and Blessing of God upon *faithful* Endeavours, is what Thousands even of common Christians can testifie : And then, why *such* a Capacity should not be a Necessary Ministerial Qualification, as well as a Capacity of teaching the Flock by preaching the Word, is what I can invent no Reason for. So that I conclude no one is *ordinarily* qualified for the *Ministerial Office*, who can't, upon common and uncommon Occasions, be the Mouth of the People in *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* to God, and express their joynt Desires and Acknowledgments, Requests and Praises, without the *Help* of Forms. Indeed, where such can't be procur'd at all, or not in sufficient numbers to serve the present Necessities of the Churches, (which was the case at the dawning of the Reformation) I think a Reader of *Prayers* and *Homilies* a *better* Teacher of the People than none-at-all. And it must be consider'd, that as in the times of Popish Darknes there was no great encouragement of Literature among the Vulgar, Ignorance being the pretended Mother of Devotion, so perhaps a Capacity to read well was a *pitch* of Learning to which *few* did arrive, and therefore *very few* were they that were better qualified. But, to countenance, encourage, and plead for an Incapacity now, which was justifiable then by *no other* Reason but *Necessity*, that cannot be ty'd and limited by any Rules, is hardly consistent with Ministerial Duty and Obligation, especially when

when 'tis confess'd, that Forms, tho' never so accurately compos'd, can't reach all particular Cases; and therefore Ministers, without the foremention'd Capacity, must upon many Occasions be with-held from the Performance of their Necessary Duty. But,

6. A Minister qualified for his Office must *understand* the Nature of the *Sacraments*, and be capable of *explaining* them to others; for the *Administration* of 'em is part of his Work. And how Unfit *he* is to administer Ordinances to his own or the Peoples benefit and advantage, who doth not himself know what he is doing, nor is capable of instructing them in the Nature of his Work, is *obvious* at the first view. Again,

7. HE should know the *Nature* of that *Power* and *Authority*, and the *Essence* of that *Discipline* CHRIST would have exercis'd in his Church; for, How else should he bear that Rule, and use that Discipline which we have already shewn you is part of his Work? Therefore the *Apostle* saith, *He must be one able to rule well in his own House*, that he may be fitted for the exercise of that Rule in the Church, which (as we have observ'd already) doth much resemble Parental Authority and Rule in a Man's Family.

8. Finally, HE must be one *professedly devoted* to God in *all* this Work and Service; one by Profession given up to God, and consecrated and set apart to the Ministerial Office; that professes himself *willing* cheerfully to do all this Duty, for the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Mens Souls; and lastly, one set apart

1 Tim.
4. 15.

to the Work, so as not to be distracted in it by any inferior Worldly Business. This I think imply'd in the Apostle's Advice, *Give thy self wholly to these things.*

AND thus much I think ordinarily necessary to qualifie a Man for the *Ministerial Office*: No one without it, unless in Cases of *manifest* Necessity, can by any Power or Persons on Earth be invested with *Ministerial Authority*. But in the *Prosperous* state of the Church more than this is requisite, if not needful; because in the outward-flourishing state of the Church Men of Learning and Interest may devote 'emselves to the Service of *GOD* in this Office, and are not to be refus'd or rejected: Besides that, in all Ages there hath been a *Luxuriancy* of *Vice* and *Errors*, when the shine of outward Prosperity hath warm'd and cherish'd that cursed Stock of Corruption that is in all Hearts; so that, upon such occasions, Men of greater Talents and Abilities are needful to be imploy'd in the Churches Service, than what we have been already describing, even Persons of the *soundest Understandings*, *deepest Judgments*, and most *copious Literature*, in conjunction with *eminent Piety*, that can be procur'd. Not to say that Religion hath been too great a Sufferer in our *Disorderly Age*, by the Pretensions of Unqualified Men to this Office, to induce Ministers to encourage all that are fond to offer 'emselves to the Work: And as the Directions of the Assembly of *Divines* at *Westminster* are what *We* commonly follow in the admission of Persons to this Office, so, I think, we shou'd not recede from 'em without
very

very great urgency, and but upon very weighty Considerations: And these require that a Person shou'd be examin'd as to his Skill in the *Original Language*, at least of the *New Testament*, in *Logic* and *Philosophy*; as to his Capacity to *defend the Truth* against *Error*, and his Talents for *Teaching*, viz. *Knowledge*, *Expression*, and *Elocution*; as well as that an Enquiry should be made into the Course of his Life, and his *good Report among them which are without*. Thus have we dispatch'd our Second, 3. 7. and pass on to the

Third Enquiry, WHO they are who have 3.
Authority to declare a Person *thus* qualified a Minister of CHRIST, by solemn *Investiture* and *Ordination*; or to declare solemnly, That 'tis CHRIST's Will such a Man should Minister in the Church: For, that this is the Substance of this Work (*Ordination*) is apparent, I think, from what hath been already said. Ordainers do not give Ministerial Power to any; the most they can do, is, only to *deliver the Commission* from CHRIST, who is the alone *Source* of all, and therefore sure of Ministerial Power. And they can deliver a Minister his Commission no otherwise, but by *publickly* and *solemnly* declaring, according to CHRIST's appointment, That he hath call'd forth such a one to the exercise of the Ministry, (by fitting him for the Work, inclining his Heart to serve his LORD therein, and by presenting him by his Providence with Opportunity for Service) and therefore authoriz'd him to undertake the Office. So that the Question here is, Who hath *Authority* from CHRIST to deliver

ver the *Commission* for the Ministry to *Qualified* Persons by *Ordination*? And there are three sorts of Persons that lay claim to this Authority, *viz.* the *Body* of the People in particular Assemblies; *Bishops*, as Superior Officers to common Ministers of the Word; and finally, all *Ordinary* Ministers, usually call'd *Presbyters*.

THE utmost the first of these will say, can be no more, as I conceive, than this, That Ordination by other Ministers is not *absolutely* necessary. Sure there are none so far bereft of the Exercise of their Reason, as to think that Able, Godly, Faithful Ministers, every way qualified for the Office themselves, may not lawfully ordain other Ministers: And if they may lawfully do the Work, there are so many Reasons to be produc'd that they should do it, as will prove in common Cases highly convenient, if not absolutely necessary: Since upon Supposition that they are Men of Learning, Capacity, and Integrity of Life, of known Diligence and Fidelity in their Ministerial Function, they are *most capable* of examining into the Qualifications and *Sufficiency* of Persons to be ordain'd, and moreover, are under a *double Obligation*, as *Christians* and *Ministers*, to be Faithful to their Lord and his Church, in this particular. Nay, the *Body* of the People can't be thought *Competent* Judges at all of these Qualifications: Not to say that 'twon'd at first view look very preposterous, to see those that are to be *taught* enquiring into the Sufficiency of the *Teachers*. And tho' it be granted, that here and there a Person of Learning, among the People, may be as capable of

examining into a Man's Sufficiency for the *Ministry* as Ministers 'emfelves, yet to argue from the Capacity of fuch *Particular* Persons to the Power and Authority of the *Body* of the People, is *Wretched Sophistry*; fince the Capacity of one or more particular Members cannot infer the like Capacity in the reft; and without a Capacity for the Office, there can be no Authority from GOD for the Exercife of it. Underftand this in Common and Ordinary Cafes, where the Direction and Help of Ministers *may* be had. But if a People be in fuch Circumftances, that they cannot have the Concurrence of other Ministers at all, in ordaining *one* among 'em, or not without *unlawful* Compliances either on their part or the Minister's to be ordain'd, then the Maxim, *Necelfity hath no Law*, muft take place, and they muft proceed in the beft method they can, to fecure the general Ends of their Society, the *Glory of G O D* and *Common Edification*. But, without fuch Necelfity, I think, the Argument from their Incapacity to prove they have no Power of Ordination, is firm and valid: G O D hath neither in Nature nor his written Word given any Power to *particular* Persons, or *collective Bodies*, for the Exercife of which they have a *Plain* and *Notorious* Incapacity.

INDEED, if from the Holy Scriptures the particular Affemblies of *Chriftians* cou'd prove 'emfelves invested with any fuch Power, all that we have hitherto faid (tho' at firft view it feems rational and cogent) wou'd be of no weight, but might juftly be refuted with,

Who

Who art thou that repliest against GOD? But we find no Direction given to 'em about this Work throughout all the Writings of the *New Testament*, or that they had any hand in it: They did in many cases interest 'emselves in the Choice of those who were to be made

Acts 6. Ministers, as the *Deacons* ordain'd by the
5, 6. Apostles; nay, of an *Apostle* to be ordain'd by an immediate signification of the Will of

Acts 1. CHRIST from Heaven, by a Sacred Lot:
23, 26. But that they were concern'd in *Ordination*, properly so call'd, doth not appear to me from any Writings of the *New Testament*; and, questionless, if the Body of the People had upon any occasion chosen Unfit Men, the Apostles had been oblig'd to refuse 'em Ordination. The like is to be said of succeeding Ministers, only with *this* difference, that the Apostles being guided by an Infalible Spirit, were not liable to Error, as succeeding Ministers be: These last therefore may refuse to ordain a fit Person chosen by the People, who are not oblig'd by their *Unjustifiable* Refusal where the Case is *notorious* and *plain*, but have liberty to Protest against their Proceeding, and to have recourse to other Ministers; or if such cannot be procur'd, have Power to give the Man a Call to the Work, which *may* be obliging to him, and be his *Sufficient* Warrant and Authority. Such was the Case of many of the Reformers at first; and we shall have occasion to consider this again afterwards.

BUT from what hath been said 'tis manifest, I think, that this Claim of the People,

un-

unless where they are justified by *flat Necessity*, may be set aside, without any *Injury* done to them: But, to decide the Difference between *Bishops* and *Presbyters* may be a matter of greater difficulty, not so much in it self as for the Unhappy and Unchristian *Feuds* that it hath occasion'd in the Christian Church. Tho' it must be observ'd, that *Presbyters* do in no wise disclaim Ordination by *Diocesan Bishops* as invalid and null, (indeed, if their Power for Ordination did lean upon the same Foundations with their Diocesan Power, they might sweat before they would prove it either *Divine*, *Scriptural*, or *Valid*, but) as they are Ministers of the Gospel in common with others, we can allow 'em the same Power which our selves do claim: So that the Enquiry under this Head is at last reduc'd to this, Whether *Presbyters* or the Ministers Authoriz'd to preach the Gospel, and administer the Sacraments, have any Power to deliver the *Ministerial Commission* as from *CHRIST*, to other Persons who are qualified? The Peoples Claim in common Cases to such Power hath been already set by. That *Bishops* have this Power, is allow'd by all concern'd in this Dispute; so that it only remains to know Whether *other* Ministers besides *Diocesan Bishops* have the same Power.

THAT we are ready to assert this, may easily be believ'd by all here present; Why else are we come together? To do a Work for which we know we have no Authority? But the World will not, it may be, take our bare Word, without offering some Reason

to vindicate our Practice; and of many that may be alledg'd, we'll content our selves with one, which methinks shou'd be Satisfactory to all who are not *strangely* prejudic'd, an Argument drawn from the *Ends* of Ordination: If these can be as well secur'd by *Presbyters* performing the Office as by *Diocesan Bishops*, why may not the former validly deliver a Minister's Commission to one duly qualified, as well as these last? If it be said, Because CHRIST hath given 'em *no Authority*; this is the very thing in question. And where's the Proof? Is there one word of the Confinement of this Work to the Superiour Episcopal Office throughout the Writings of the New Testament? (not to say, that the Superiority of the Episcopal Office it self is what I have never yet found there.) Nay, Doth not the Apostle *Paul* speak of *Ordination* by the Hands of the *Presbytery*, and that of an *Archbishop* too, as some of our Brethren contend *Timothy* was? Who but such as are resolv'd to carry their Point, right or wrong, have the face to say, That *Presbyters* are forbidden to meddle with this Work, when *Paul* tells us, that even in Apostolical Times 'twas done by the Hands of the *Presbyters*? I know indeed that *Grotius*, after *Ferom*, *Ambrose*, &c. nay, and *Calvin* himself, understand by the *Presbytery* here, the Office to which *Timothy* was ordain'd, not the Officers that ordain'd him. But not to take notice of an unusual Transposition in the Sentence, if this Sense were the true one, since *ἡ ἐκκλησία* and *ἡ πρεσβυτερία*, one at the beginning, t'other at the end of the Verse,

1 Tim.
4. 14.

De Imp.
Sum. Po-
testa.

Verse, must be coupled together. To let that pass, I say, the Scripture-Language is the best Interpreter of it self; nor can we judge so well of the Sense of a Scripture-word in one place, as by examining into its Signification in another. Now the word *πρεσβυτερον* occurs in two places more of the *New Testament*, and no oftner, as I have observ'd, and in both those places it certainly signifies the *Confessus Seniorum*, or *Bench of Presbyters*, and is by our Translators render'd the *Elders*; and why it should not signifie the same here, is pretty difficult to assign a Reason. 'Tis possible indeed that by the Expression a *Council of Bishops* may be intended, which is the Fancy of some of the *junior* Ancients: But doth it not argue a great deal of Assurance in some Men, to assert that it must needs signifie *Bishops*, because none but *Bishops* did or cou'd ordain? Which is to prove the Assertion by repeating it, and assuring us it *was* so, because it *must* be so: But why it must be so, I can't invent a Reason, unless this be one, That otherwise the *Scripture* and their *Scheme* wou'd not be concordant.

AND tho' it be probable that *Paul* was concern'd in *Timothy's* Ordination, (probable I say, because 'tis not certain that the Gift given by *Paul's* Imposition of Hands, and by that of the *Presbytery*, were all one) yet, that upon this Supposition he acted in concert with the *Presbytery*, is plain, from the two Texts compar'd: And if *Presbyters* had not Power to act as well as he, they had never been employ'd; if they had not Equal Power, he wou'd certainly have made a difference be-

Luke 22,

66.

Acts 22,

5.

Chryso-

stom,

Theodo-

ret, Oecu-

menius,

&c.

2 Tim.

1. 6.

tween his Interest in the Work and theirs, whereas he has made the laying on of their Hands *Equally* serviceable to the Conveying the Office with his own, since he speaks of it as the Act of a *Presbytery*, without so much as hinting at his own *Presidency* therein; tho' 'tis more than probable, that if he were the only Apostle concern'd, he did both *direct* and *preside*. The Argument drawn by our Brethren from the Ordinations of *Timothy* and *Titus*, to prove this Work a Peculiar of the Bishops Office, is too inconsequent and faulty to stop us, especially since we have before hinted at a flaw in it.

INDEED cou'd there be any plain Text of Scripture produc'd, any good Reasons or Arguments drawn from Scripture alledg'd, for the confinement of this Work to a Superior Officer, our Arguments from the Ends of Ordination, and the attaining these Ends by Presbyters ordaining as well as Bishops, wou'd not be at all concluding; because where the Great God hath once determin'd the Question, all farther reasoning is superfluous: Nay, 'tis *presumptuous* in us, to guide our Actions by any *imagin'd* Excellencies in another way of procedure, when once a Divine Command is past, That it shall be done *this* way, and no other. But our Brethren producing no such Divine Command to bring the Dispute to an issue, but, instead thereof, committing us to Antiquity, (which is really lead-

Vide
Dall. de
usu Pat.
Calamy's

Abridgment of it, in his *Defence of Non-conformity*, Part I, and judge.

ing

ing us into a Wood, that we may lose ourselves, rather than putting us upon a Method for finding out the Truth) I can't but think this Argument is of great Validity. God hath told us in his Word, and by the very Nature of the thing, that Ordination to the Ministry of the Word is ordinarily to be done by the Ministers of the Word: He hath not, as we can find, put this *whole* Trust into the hands of *Superior* Officers; therefore if the Ends of Ordination may be secur'd by *Presbyters* ordaining as well as *Diocesan Bishops*, i.e. in a word, If the Work may be done as well by them as by these, what Reason can be offer'd to prove that the Work must be done in the *Presence* of the *Bishops*, and by *their Authority* only?

NOW, that the Ends of Ordination may be secur'd by the Ordination of Presbyters as well as Bishops, may easily be evinc'd from a brief Specification of 'em; they are chiefly these: Publickly to declare a Man, after *due trial* of his *Abilities*, to be *Qualified* for the Ministry; to *commend* him to the Grace of GOD and his Blessing by *Prayer*; to *conciliate* the Peoples *Respect* among whom he must minister; and to prevent the *Intrusions* of Men Unqualified. Now, doth it not appear at first sight, that Men equally Wise, Holy, Learned, and Faithful in the Ministerial Work with Bishops, (and sure 'tis not immodest to suppose there may be some, and many such, Presbyters in the World, there being a much-greater number of Presbyters than Bishops throughout the Churches, and I believe I may

appeal to themselves for Proof, that they don't find an *immediate sensible Improvement* in Wisdom and Holiness by their elevation to the *Episcopal Dignity*, nor any other Improvement than they would have had if they had still continued in the *Rank* of Presbyters.) I say, Doth it not appear that such are as sufficient to attain these Ends as Bishops *themselves*? May not such make as *exact* a Trial of a Person's Ministerial Talents and Abilities, and as *publicly* declare 'em to the Churches? Are they not *equally* capable of forbidding unqualified Men from meddling with the Sacred Function? May they not with as much *Efficacy* and as much *Seriousness* recommend to the Divine Grace and Benediction, and among serious and considerate People conciliate *Equal* Respect for those they ordain? What is there in the Nature of Things to contradict this? 'Tis confess'd, where Men have drunk in Prejudices by Education and Converse, and have their Heads fill'd with *another* set of Thoughts, it may not be easy to dispossess 'em of these Prejudices. Those who have heard Diocesan Episcopacy *extoll'd* to the Skies, and loudly proclaim'd *Divine*, and all that part of the Church that wants an Episcopal Ministry shut out of GOD's *Family*, and sentenc'd to *Hell* without Pity or Mercy, (to such a pitch of *Uncharity* hath flaming *Bigotry* carried some Men) may be terrified with the *formidable* Bugbear, and be impenetrable to these Reasonings. And there are Prejudices of another nature, that may as *forcibly* bar out the Truth; but let Men look on things nakedly, and as they

they are in themselves, without Prejudice or Prepossession, and if Presbyters, or call 'em if you will Inferior Ministers, are Sufficient for this Work, so as to attain and secure all the Ends of it, I shall hardly trust my own Reasoning Faculty, if their Authority for it don't follow as *clearly* as Light from the Sun. For tho' a *bare Capacity* doth not give Authority in all Cases, without an *Intervening Commission*, yet, that the Argument from Capacity to Authority is good in *this Case*, is to me manifest from what hath been said, even to a Demonstration.

SO that now I conceive this Enquiry also answer'd, and our own Practice, and the Power of Ministers to ordain, and to exercise that Office to which they are ordain'd, sufficiently vindicated. And since we have finish'd our first Undertaking, and given you, I think, a *true* and *just* Notion of *Ordination*, we are next,

II. TO enquire how far this may be necessary; an Enquiry, as I conceive, of great importance, tho' in a great measure overlook'd by such who have an Interest to serve by magnifying this Rite, and are fond of representing it as possess'd of some secret Energy, which the Simple Account we have given of it doth no way countenance, to which it cannot pretend. An Answer to it may be given as followeth.

I. NEITHER Ordination by *Bishops*, nor by other Ministers, is *absolutely* Necessary to the *Being* of the Ministry. A Person may be a Minister without Ordination by other Ministers,

sters. A Man may be under an *Obligation* to Ministerial Work, when he can have no Investiture in the Office by *this* Rite; and, as hath been shown already, no Person can be oblig'd to do the Duty of a Minister without being *ipso facto* possess'd of Ministerial Power: This Power is not given, but acknowledg'd and declar'd in Ordination. And yet in many cases a Man may be oblig'd to the Work when he can't be ordain'd; and where this Obligation is notorious and plain, there is a sufficient and valid Declaration of his Ministerial Power, or of the Will of CHRIST, that he shou'd act in this Office. If a *Company* of *Christians* were Shipwreck'd on a *remote* and *unknown* Shore, to which they were incapable of fetching ordain'd Ministers from any other place, I think a Man must be out of his Wits to assert, that *this Body* of Men must live like Heathens, and not openly own CHRIST, by performing all common *Christian* Exercises in public Assemblies, for want of an *Ordain'd Minister*. Without doubt, he who was the most capable among 'em to teach the rest and perform the other Duties of a Minister, was bound *in Conscience* to undertake that Work; and if oblig'd to do the Work of a Minister, he had certainly Authority from CHRIST to be a Minister, unless we make CHRIST's Commands *Contradictory*, and say, a Man was oblig'd in Duty to do *that*, which *when done*, wou'd be *Unlawful*, and a *Sin*, for want of *Sufficient* Authority. The like may be said if *Ministers* or *Bishops* refuse Ordination to *Qualified Men* unless they'll submit to unlawful terms,

terms, and no other Ministers can be procur'd to do the Work, which was the Case of several of the first Reformers. In these and all such-like Cases, *Ceremonies* must be *us'd* whilst a due regard is had to what is Chief and Principal in *Ordination*, the manifest Qualifications of the Person *to be* ordain'd. Suppose that by the *Fundamental* Constitution of this Kingdom the Parliament (*i. e.* Prince, Lords and Commons) had Power to give Kingly Power to any Successor to the then Prince, whom they should please to choose upon his or her Demise; and, that the *Customary* and *Appointed* Method of Investiture with the Kingly Power and Office was by *Coronation* to be perform'd by *Bishops*; and, moreover, suppose there were no Bishops to do this Work, or none but such as wou'd oblige him first to deliver up his Kingdom to the Pope, and wear his *Crown*, and exercise his *Royalty* in *Subordination* to him, (which was a Case more than supposable once, tho' we hope 'twill never be again :) No Doubt is to be made, but that by the Act of Parliament such Successor wou'd have a *Commission*, and be *oblig'd* to receive the *Homage* and do the *Duty* of a King, without any *Coronation* at all; or if *Coronation* were us'd, there cou'd be no need of such Bishops Concurrence. Or, to come nearer to the matter in hand, The *Priests* under the old *Jewish Constitution* were personally known and mark'd out by God, being the *Male Descendants* of *Aaron*, but many *Ceremonies* were appointed for their *Consecration*, and particularly the *Holy Oil*: but yet they did not cease to be *Priests*, nor

Vide
Exod. 29
Levit. 8.

H to

Jurieu Sy-
steme de
l'Eglise,
Liv. III,
Cap. 20,
Pag. 585.

to act as such, when refus'd to be anointed with
holy Oil. As in the time of the Second Temple,
when the first Sacred Composition was lost,
and the then Church of the *Jews* did not think
'emselfes *empower'd* to make a *new Mixture*.
So that, even under that *Ceremonial Dispensa-*
tion, *Rituals* must give way in Cases of Necessi-
ty, and therefore much more under the Go-
spel, where *Spiritual Qualifications* are re-
quir'd, instead of that *Carnal Qualification*, by
natural Descent from *Aaron*, requir'd of old.
Where therefore these *Qualifications* are pre-
sent, the Man is willing to be employ'd in the
Work, and he is *manifestly oblig'd* to under-
take it, there every thing *Essential* to the Of-
fice is present; and in Cases of Necessity no
more is, nor can be requir'd. Nay,

2. W H E R E Ordination by Bishops or
other Ministers may be had, yet are not all the
Acts of an *Unordain'd* Person invalid and null
to a People that owns and receives him for a
Minister, if he be otherwise duly Qualified.
He himself may be *Conscientious* in the Refusal
of Ordination, tho' his Conscience be *un-*
doubtedly erroneous, and, as we shall see by
and by, he sins in this *Refusal*: But we can't
think G O D will disown a Man that faithfully
serves him in this Work for the sake of this
Error, few Ministers being exempt from Er-
rors as grievous as his. Nay, 'tis notorious
in Experience, that G O D hath bless'd the
Labours of such to many Souls: And I dare
not absolutely disown those as *no Ministers*,
whom C H R I S T has own'd and bless'd in the
Ministry, tho' I disown and condemn, and
that *justly* too, their Refusal of being declar'd

Mi-

Ministers in CHRIST's Appointed way. I can't think *Ordination* more of the *Essence* of the Ministry than *Baptism* is of *Christianity*, and yet I may be oblig'd to own one for a *Christian* by reason of his Profession, follow'd with a Life strictly conformable to what he professes, tho' he were never baptiz'd. *Constantine* the Great, for instance, was not to be disown'd as *no Christian*, tho' he did intentionally defer his *Baptism* till he came to *Jordan*, to be baptiz'd where CHRIST was, and, in event, till Death was near: Or those *ancient Christians*, who did defer their Baptism till the approaches of Death. But, by owning 'em for *Christians*, I am not oblig'd to own their *Erroneous Principles* or *Practices*, but that only which was *truly Christian* in 'em, and did justly denominate 'em such. The like I say as to a duly-qualified Person *Unordain'd*, and yet *exercising* the Ministerial Office; if CHRIST approves and blesses his Endeavours, I wou'd not scruple the owning him for one of his Ministers, tho' I must upon all fit occasions *disown* and *protest* against his sinful Neglect or Refusal of *Ordination*. But,

*Euseb. de
Vit. Con-
stant.*

3. ORDINATION, where it may be had, is Necessary, by a *Divine Precept*, to keep up that Order in Churches which is necessary to the beauty and well-being of 'em: For if there were not a Body of Men in the Church authoriz'd to examin into the Abilities of those who offer 'emselv's to the Sacred Service of the Ministry, and approve or reject 'em, according as they were found qualified upon trial, but any might 'emselv's assume Authority

for the discharge of this Office, at the *Suggestion* of their own *Pride* or *Fancy*, or that of weak injudicious Persons, that may ignorantly *applaud* their *Gifts*, what a Scene of Disorders wou'd presently be let in upon the Christian Church, since none are more ready to run on this Errand than those who are least qualified, and the Humor of our Unhappy Times (when every *Mean Fellow*, who is weary of his own Trade, and affects a little more Honour than his own Profession will afford him, conceits himself fit to be a Teacher of others, and steps into the Pulpit) informs us what *Scandalous Disorders* wou'd be the certain Consequents, if once this Hedge were broken down, and the Office lay common to every one who had the Presumption to take it! For, if such Disorders have been committed in our Day, and in the memory of our Forefathers, and *Raw* and *Ignorant* Men have cry'd down a *Regular, Pious, Learned, and Judicious* Ministry, and proclaim'd 'emselfes more sufficient for the Work, when a *Publick Testimony* hath been born against the Sin, and their unwarrantable Invasions have been *sharply* rebuk'd, what wou'd the Consequents be, if once the Opinion were universal, That *Ordination by Ministers* is altogether Unnecessary and Useless? Not to observe, that if there were no such Trial to be made of Mens Fitness for the Ministry, a Gap wou'd be open'd for the broaching what *Errors* and *Heresies* Men pleas'd, and poysoning the Christian Churches without any Remedy. Tho' this gives no Authority to Ministers to make New *Articles* of Faith,

Faith, and paulm their own Persuasions upon others in *unnecessary* or *difficult* matters, for *Divine Oracles*, nor gives Encouragement to Clergy-Usurpations, or Dominion over Conscience.

BUT from what hath been said 'tis, I think, plain, that the Order, Beauty, and Peace of the Church can't be preserv'd in an Ordinary way, without such a *Guard* upon the Entrance into the Ministry: And 'tis not to be thought that the LORD JESUS hath left it expos'd to such Unavoidable Mischief, and taken no care about its Welfare and Preservation; for it would be evidently *Delirious* to have recourse here to *meer* Omnipotence and Extraordinary Power. Many Texts of Scripture do import Ministers being invested with Power to prevent these Irregularities, by enquiring into the Qualifications of such as are to be employ'd in this Service: What else doth *Paul's Advice* 1 Tim. 5. to *Timothy* signifie, *Lay hands suddenly on no* 22, &c. *man, neither be partakers of other mens Sins; keep thy self pure*, with what follows? What else his Charge to him, to *commit to faithful men*, 2 Tim. that were able to teach others, the things committed 2. 2. him in charge? Which plainly signifies his investing them with the Doctoral or Episcopal Office; Why else, in one word, did he leave *Titus* in *Crete* to *ordain Elders in every City*, and Tit. 1. give him so particular account of the Qualifi- 5, — 10. cations necessary to the Office? It must be acknowledged indeed, that the *Faithful* 'emselves are oblig'd to look to it, that *none* be chosen or receiv'd by them for Ministers who are *Notoriously Unqualified*; but the Ministers, as the most

most capable, are entrusted with the immediate Inspection into these Qualifications; 'tis to them that this Care is Immediately and Principally recommended.

SO that, upon the whole, such Ordination is apparently Necessary, by vertue of a Divine Command, to the preservation of Order in the Church, and therefore to its Well-being: The just Inference from which is this, That no Persons can, without such Ordination by Ministers, after due Trial, discharge the Ministerial Office, without *disobeying* a Divine Command, *breaking thro'* an Establish'd Order, or without being *deeply guilty* before God; unless in Cases of flat and visible Necessity. It remains that we shou'd

III. MAKE some Improvement of what has been said; but because I have already exceeded Bounds, I must be short here. A few Words of Advice to the People, and a Word to you who are to be Ordain'd, shall close the Discourse. *To the People.*

1. IF it be as you have heard, That the Minister's Office takes in so much Work; if such Qualifications are necessary, then *Esteem* your Minister, and *Encourage* him in his Work. *I Thess. 5. 12, 13. thren, know them which are over you in the Lord, and esteem 'em highly in Love for their Works sake.* Give all due Honour to him, for the sake of the Work in which he is serving C H R I S T and you; do not any way discourage him, by *Disobedience* to his Calls, *Unruliness* in your Walking, *Unpeaceableness* in your mutual Behaviour, or by *Pinching* and *Straitning* him with

with a Defective and Insufficient Maintenance; for thus must you shew your Regard to CHRIST, whose Servants, Ambassadors and Representatives, in some sense, Ministers are. Again,

2. If your Ministers be set apart to their Work by sufficient Authority, do not suffer your Respect to abate by any *Clamours* of others against the Validity of their Ministrations. Indeed, to sincere Christians, who have felt the Blessing of G O D on their own Souls, accompanying our Ministerial Endeavours, one wou'd think *this Advice* needless; but if, notwithstanding such Experience, Christians may be tempted to disrespect, condemn, and deny Particular Ministers, (which is but too common) why may they not also be tempted to *deny* and *disparage* our Ministry it self? Watch therefore against such Temptations and Attempts: Hearken to no Cavils of any against our Office, that wou'd induce you to disown and reject those as no Ministers who have all the *Essential* Qualifications, and moreover every thing that is *Essential* in the *Investiture* by Ordination, tho' we may want some Circumstances, made Necessary by Human *Customs* and *Canons*, but by no binding *Laws* of CHRIST. As long as we are faithful to our LORD and your Souls, be ready to *Vindicate* us, and *magnifie* as 'tis needful our Office. I do not mean, by *Unbrotherly* and *Unpeaceable* Scuffles, by *Contentious Sinful* Rage, or *Revengeful* Recriminations: No, own every thing that is *truly Christian* in those who will hardly afford you the Name: Honour every

every one that wears the *Image* of your Redeemer, whatever his Sentiments are of you; and every one that *professes* the Name of CHRIST, according to the *Credibility* of his Profession; and let *Charity* have the *Ascendant* when you pass your Judgment on any; let not Opposition provoke you, and enflame your Spirits: Pay a due Respect to all those who bear the *Character* of Ministers, and profess to be the Servants of CHRIST in that Work: Take up *no Reports* against any such upon *slight* Evidence, but by all means have a care of wounding Christianity to the Heart thro' the *Sides* of *Ministers*, in this very Licentious and Unbelieving Age, when the Faults of Ministers and Professors are so commonly charg'd, by *Men* of *Reprobate Minds*, on the *Innocent* and *Glorious* Doctrin which they profess and preach: And, above all, abhor and fear that *Schismatical Practice* of condemning whole Churches in a lump as *no Christians*, for the sake of *Ceremonies*, where every thing *indeed* *Essential* to Christianity, or the *Ministry*, is preserv'd, preach'd, prais'd, and practis'd.

3. BE careful not to Encourage any, *much less* Men unqualified to undertake this Office, without *due* and *regular* Ordination: Foment no Swellings of Pride or Self-conceit in any, that may have this tendency: Remember that the Work of the Ministry is great and weighty; that the Lord CHRIST hath, for *great* and *weighty* Ends, establish'd *Order* in his Church, and that 'tis heinous Sin in you to encourage any to break down the Hedge, and enter into the Office, without being let in at
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this Door, which, our Saviour himself tells us, is the Property of a *Thief*, not a *Shepherd*; and sure 'twill be grievous Sin in you to encourage such Robberies. As much as you can, promote *Knowledge, Understanding, and Serious Godliness* among one-another; this will facilitate your Minister's Work, and encourage him to be the more diligent and laborious, the more ready and chearful in the service of your Souls, and more heartily desirous of your Spiritual Welfare: But rebuke all Pretenders to the Ministerial Office, that will *not undergo* a Trial by other Ministers; disown them, and refuse their Service, if you wou'd not be false to your LORD, and the cruel Abettors of *Disorder, Faction and Error* in the Churches: I mean in common Cases, where evident Necessity will not justify you in doing otherwise.

2. MY Advice to you, my Brother, to be Ordain'd, is design'd to stir up your Mind by way of remembrance of the *Nature and Obligations* of your Undertaken Office, which, I question not, you have already consider'd; and that it may have the more weight, I shall propose it to you in Scripture words: You have heard some account of your Office and Duty as a Minister, and the Qualifications requir'd for the discharge of the Work, do you endeavour faithfully to do this Duty, and shew forth your Qualifications for the Office in the whole Course of your Ministry: And in order hereunto, See that you exercise your self unto Godliness. War a good warfare, holding Faith and a good Conscience. Be an Example to Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Spirit, and in Purity. Be gentle to all men, apt to teach,

1 Tim.
4. 7.
Chap. 1.
18, 19.
Ch. 2. 12.

- 2Tim. 2. teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. Hold fast the form of sound Words delivered in the Gospel in Faith and Love, i. e. matters Doctrinal and Practical. Shun prophane and vain babblings, foolish and unlearned questions, that do gender strife. Avoid the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, from whence come envy, strife, railings, evil-surmizings, &c. Give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine: meditate on these things, give your self wholly to them, that your profiting may appear to all. Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season; re-buke, reprove, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine, i. e. Patience, and a faithful publication of all Truths that are most likely to stir, convince and save. Follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with them that call on the LORD out of a pure Heart. Be not ashamed of the Testimony of the LORD, nor backward to partake of the Afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of GOD, i. e. since you may expect Support from his Omnipotence. Be frequently stirring up the Gift in you, by reflecting on the awful Engagements of this Season and Solemnity. In a word, according to the main Advice in that Apostolical Directory, the two Epistles to Timothy, and one to Titus, Instruct your Hearers faithfully in all their Duty to GOD, one-another, the Church, and Interests of Religion. Take heed to your self and Doctrine, that you may save your own Soul, and their Souls that hear you. And finally, Take heed to your self and all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you a Bishop, to feed the Church of GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood: that so, when the chief Pastor shall appear, you may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.
- The E N D.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER several diligent Reviews of what is before written, I can't but esteem the reasoning just; yet for the sake of some, into whose hands this may fall, it may not be amiss to obviate a few Exceptions.

If any then shou'd turn the Argument us'd pag. 6. against us, and ask, What account can be given of *Paul's* leaving *Titus* in *Crete* to ordain Elders, if these had originally a Right to ordain others? I think, such an Account as is very satisfying, to Men unprejudic'd may be easily given, by allowing, that Ordination and such-like General Work was *Titus's* Principal Work; not as an Officer Essentially different from other Presbyters, but as an Itinerant Minister, who had no stated Charge, no particular Flock to take care of; so that it was apparently more fit for him to do this Work in *Crete*, *Dalmatia*, or elsewhere, as the Apostle Spirit of God should direct, than that fix'd Pastors shou'd leave their stated Work, to do what the Apostles had appointed more general Ministers (not hinder'd by any particular Charge) to perform. And if such a General Officer were still employ'd in Ordinations, and his Work esteem'd more honourable than that of fix'd Pastors, and he in that sense superior

Vid. what
is said in
pag. 25.

to 'em, whilst their *Original* Power of Ordaining, when chosen out to this Service, were acknowledged, I know none that wou'd so far run counter to *Apostolical* Practice, as to quarrel with this Office.

If any shou'd in like manner retort the Argument *Page 39, 40*. That we find no Direction given to *Presbyters* about *Ordination*, nor that they had any hand in it, throughout the *New Testament*, therefore they have no Power to Ordain. I believe what hath been afterwards said in proof of their Power may be a sufficient Reply. Besides, we may say, that all the Scripture-Histories of Ordination, and Directions about it, prove the Concern of *Presbyters* therein; for I know of no Authority that Ministers have, but from CHRIST; nor of any Grant made by him, but in the Ministerial Commission; nor can I find in the Commission any *Essentially-Diverse* Power given to different Ministers. Beyond Doubt, all the Ministers of the Gospel have a Power by the Commission to Disciple, Baptize, and teach the Baptiz'd all things that CHRIST hath commanded, and do *all things* necessary to the Preservation of his Church to the end of the World, and therefore to give the same Commission which they have receiv'd to other Men. (And, by the way, this will serve to corroborate the Argument in Pages 18, 19, against the Legislative Power of any of CHRIST's Officers; teaching whatsoever CHRIST hath commanded gives them no Authority to make *other* Laws, properly so call'd, nor to use any Power but what is

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Doctrinal and Persuasive.) But, to return, if CHRIST hath made no Essential Difference between Ministers, in his Commission to 'em, 'tis plain that they are, as to the *Essence* of their Work, the same, and consequently have the same *Essential* Power and Authority, tho' there may be a *gradual* Difference between 'em for Orders sake, as there was between the *Apostles* and *other Ministers*; which, I believe, none wou'd now oppose.

If any shou'd oppose to the Argument Page 38, 39. That Incapacity doth not deprive Persons of their Natural Rights. I say, that in Common Cases there are many Instances to refute 'em. *Fools* and *Idiots* are by all Laws put under the Tuition of others, when they grown up to the Stature and Age of Men: And the greatest *Patrons* of *Popular Power* render usually this Reason for Childrens Subjection to their Parent's Will and Disposal during a state of Childhood, That they are incapable of managing themselves, and must be trusted with the wiser Love of Parents, till they have *overgrown* this *Incapacity*. And tho' 'tis allow'd, that Persons of as great apparent Incapacity for it, do choose Members of Parliament and other Officers in a Kingdom, of whose Qualifications they are no better Judges than common Christians are of the Qualifications of Ministers, yet wou'd not this be objected here to any purpose, because we do allow the People a Power of *choosing* their Ministers. But if by the *Constitution* of this Kingdom and its *Fundamental Laws* (especially if these were Divine) there were

were Provision made, that all that are chosen Members of Parliament shou'd, before their sitting and voting, undergo a Trial by *appointed* Officers *fit* to enquire into their Qualifications for the Trust, which Qualifications were also declar'd by these Fundamental Laws, and such as the People were no such capable Judges of as the authoriz'd Officers, I think the People wou'd have no *Wrong*, if whilst these Officers were living and faithful, they had Power to forbid Unqualified Men the meddling with the Trust; tho', if these Officers fail'd, and did *notoriously* violate their Trust, neither the *People* nor their *chosen* Representatives were to be determin'd by 'em (in Cases where the Public Good did not require it.) But Qualified Men were (when duly chosen) to be esteem'd invested with Sufficient Powers; and to act accordingly; tho' this Power is not deriv'd from the People, but from GOD, the ALONE FOUNTAIN of Power, the Peoples Election being only the *Means* of Conveyance. The same is much more to be said in the Case before us, of *Ordination to the Ministry*.

It is to be observed, that the Power of Ordination is not a Power of the People, but of the Church, or of the whole Body of Ministers, who are the proper Judges of the Qualifications of those who are to be ordained. The Power of Ordination is not a Power of the People, but of the Church, or of the whole Body of Ministers, who are the proper Judges of the Qualifications of those who are to be ordained. The Power of Ordination is not a Power of the People, but of the Church, or of the whole Body of Ministers, who are the proper Judges of the Qualifications of those who are to be ordained.

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